

Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory

19 A Complex Drive, P.O. Box 112
Wikwemikong, Ontario P0P 2J0

May 24, 2019

Kasey Rupcic
c/o Nathan Tidridge
Waterdown District High School
215 Parkside Drive
Waterdown, ON L8B 1B9

Dear Mr. Rupcic:

Thank you for your letter requesting information on Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory for your Indigenous Studies Program. It gives us great hope with regards to reconciliation when students, like yourself, take the time to begin a respectful dialogue in order to understand the issues of our people.

I can only offer a short response to the questions you have, as the topics require a more in-depth conversation and, I suspect, more than is required for your assignment.

First, you have raised a very important issue on our status as an "unceded" and how it relates to our relationship with Canada and the Islands Claim. You are right to question "what the Canadian government's role in all of this is if the territory was never ceded."

The British Crown and subsequent government, Canada, did not have the authority to take control over any lands not ceded by the indigenous peoples in "Canada" or anywhere else in North America without a treaty of cessation. I will refer you to the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* which outlines provisions for a treaty making process in order to establish lawful cessations of land. However, we established a relationship with the British Crown through the *1764 Treaty of Niagara* which formalized our relationship as allies and each other's jurisdiction and authority through wampum belts. Throughout our history with the Crown, we have maintained a position of sovereignty over our people and territory and have not ceded any of our rights.

You are correct in that Canada/Ontario will "transfer" the islands in a negotiated settlement. Although the lands were not theirs to "transfer" to begin with, this is more of an internal administrative issue of governments because of the complex lands system they are currently held in. We maintain the lands have always will be ours in any agreement.

Regarding the Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples; 6. Canada must secure our free, prior and informed consent on all actions which impact us. In most cases, this principle is honoured. However, previous governments have passed bills, such as the omnibus bill, where we were not consulted.; 8. The fiscal relationship is being reviewed; 9. We are currently discussing reconciliation with Canada through a formal process.

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For more information, regarding our Islands Claim, please contact John Manitowabi, Director, Lands Department, Wiikwemkoong Unceded at 1-800-880-1406, ext. 250.

All the very best in your studies.

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Respectfully,



Ogimaa Duke Peltier